

Nomination for Assistant Secretaries of Labor

April 19, 1993

The President today named California Chief Deputy Treasurer E. Olena Berg and former Michigan Department of Commerce Director Douglas Ross to senior positions at the Department of Labor. He intends to nominate Ms. Berg to be Assistant Secretary for Pension and Welfare Benefit Programs, Pension and Welfare Benefits Administration, and Mr. Ross to be Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training, Employment and Training Administration.

“Olena Berg and Doug Ross have been effective and innovative officials at the State government level,” said the President. “Both have significant business experience as well. I am very pleased that they will be part of Secretary Reich’s team at Labor.”

NOTE: Biographies of the nominees were made available by the Office of the Press Secretary.

Remarks on Presenting the Teacher of the Year Award

April 20, 1993

The President. Good afternoon. Please be seated.

I want to say, first, how delighted I am to be here with Secretary Riley and with Senator Graham. The three of us served as Governors together during the 1980’s when we worked constantly on strategies to improve our schools, when we led often difficult and long efforts to upgrade the standards in American education and to improve the quality of instruction our children were receiving.

There were no two Governors whom I admired more during that period than the two who now stand on this stage with the Teacher of the Year. And I think both of them would join me in saying that, after all the testimony has been heard and all the bills have been passed and the funds have been raised and allocated, it all comes down to what happens between the teacher and the students in the classroom.

That’s why today’s ceremony honoring the National Teacher of the Year is so important. Tracey Leon Bailey has won recognition all across our country for highly advanced and innovative science programs. He’s developed and introduced into Florida’s classrooms cutting-edge programs in molecular biology and DNA fingerprinting, subjects usually taught only in college and, I might add, probably only dimly understood here in the Nation’s Capital.

Within 3 years of being hired by a satellite high school, Mr. Bailey’s institution had one of

the strongest science programs in the entire State of Florida, and it won numerous national and international awards. These advanced programs aren’t just for a favored few. Tracey Bailey has inspired all kinds of students, including those previously known as low-achieving or at-risk, to reach for excellence and to attain it. This is what our students need and what our country needs.

Today, we know that a good future with high wages and rich opportunities rests on the foundation of quality education for a lifetime. The basics aren’t enough anymore. All our kids need competence in math and science and advanced problemsolving. That’s why Tracey Bailey’s accomplishments are so important and why I am so pleased and proud to participate in recognizing and honoring these accomplishments.

Tracey, you represent the best in the United States. I’m glad to recognize you today and to formally present you with this apple award as the Teacher of the Year for 1993.

[At this point, the President presented the award, and Mr. Bailey made a brief statement of appreciation.]

The President. In closing, I would like to also welcome the education leaders from Florida who are here, those representing the national education groups who have also come. I’d like to recognize Tracey’s Congressman, Representa-

tive Jim Bacchus in the back, himself a great advocate of education. And I'd like to remind all of you that the ultimate purpose of the National Teacher of the Year Award is to find a way for the rest of us to express our appreciation to people all across this country who give their lives to our children, all of the teachers of this country who get up every day and do

their best to try to advance the cause of learning for all the children of America. They are, in so many ways, our most important public servants.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:25 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

The President's News Conference *April 20, 1993*

Tragedy in Waco

The President. On February the 28th, four Federal agents were killed in the line of duty trying to enforce the law against the Branch Davidian compound, which had illegally stockpiled weaponry and ammunition and placed innocent children at risk. Because the BATF operation had failed to meet its objective, a 51-day standoff ensued.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation then made every reasonable effort to bring this perilous situation to an end without bloodshed and further loss of life. The Bureau's efforts were ultimately unavailing because the individual with whom they were dealing, David Koresh, was dangerous, irrational, and probably insane. He engaged in numerous activities which violated both Federal law and common standards of decency. He was, moreover, responsible for the deaths and injuries which occurred during the action against the compound in February. Given his inclination towards violence and in an effort to protect his young hostages, no provocative actions were taken for more than 7 weeks by Federal agents against the compound.

This weekend I was briefed by Attorney General Reno on an operation prepared by the FBI, designed to increase pressure on Koresh and persuade those in the compound to surrender peacefully. The plan included a decision to withhold the use of ammunition, even in the face of fire, and instead to use tear gas that would not cause permanent harm to health but would, it was hoped, force the people in the compound to come outside and to surrender.

I was informed of the plan to end the siege. I discussed it with Attorney General Reno. I asked the questions I thought it was appropriate

for me to ask. I then told her to do what she thought was right, and I take full responsibility for the implementation of the decision.

Yesterday's action ended in a horrible human tragedy. Mr. Koresh's response to the demands for his surrender by Federal agents was to destroy himself and murder the children who were his captives, as well as all the other people who were there who did not survive. He killed those he controlled, and he bears ultimate responsibility for the carnage that ensued.

Now we must review the past with an eye toward the future. I have directed the United States Departments of Justice and Treasury to undertake a vigorous and thorough investigation to uncover what happened and why and whether anything could have been done differently. I have told the Departments to involve independent professional law enforcement officials in the investigation. I expect to receive analysis and answers in whatever time is required to complete the review. Finally, I have directed the Departments to cooperate fully with all congressional inquiries so that we can continue to be fully accountable to the American people.

I want to express my appreciation to the Attorney General, to the Justice Department, and to the Federal agents on the frontlines who did the best job they could under deeply difficult circumstances.

Again I want to say, as I did yesterday, I am very sorry for the loss of life which occurred at the beginning and at the end of this tragedy in Waco. I hope very much that others who will be tempted to join cults and to become involved with people like David Koresh will be deterred by the horrible scenes they have seen over the last 7 weeks. And I hope very much